Trump: Prototype of the Spectacle

If Kennedy was the prototype of the pharmaceutical age, Donald J. Trump is the prototype of the spectacle. He is not simply a politician who uses media. He is media, politics and personality

fused into a single broadcast. His rise is not an accident of populism, but a symptom of a global transformation: power shifting from institutional gravity to the gravitational pull of spectacle.

Trump does not conceal his weaknesses. He

inflates them into strengths. Where Kennedy masked fragility with an image of health, Trump wears fragility as performance: grievance, rage, excess, appetite. What in another era would disqualify him becomes his currency. Authenticity is no longer “character” in the old

sense, but the willingness to expose impulse, anger, even chaos.

The key lies in the fusion of character and office. Kennedy kept his illnesses, compulsions, and medications hidden; the presidency stood above the man. Trump

collapses the distinction: the presidency is nothing more or less than Trump himself — his moods, his tweets, his stagecraft. Government becomes theater, policy becomes slogans, diplomacy becomes spectacle.

This transformation is not only American.

Around the world, leaders emerge who understand that politics is now an attention economy. In Brazil, India, Italy, Hungary, the Philippines, and beyond, we see the same formula: visibility is power, scandal is fuel, outrage is oxygen. Institutions bend not around programs or

principles, but around the capacity of a single figure to dominate the screen.

Trump, then, is not an aberration but a sociological phenomenon. He embodies the global drift of politics into spectacle as governance. The Cold

War needed myths of vigor; the 21st century needs saturation of attention. The leader is no longer a distant symbol of statehood, but a permanent performer in the theater of mass media.

The consequences are paradoxical:

Institutions erode, but loyalty deepens.

Policy stumbles, but narrative hardens.

Chaos reigns, but followers feel certainty.

Trump is not Camelot; he

is the algorithm. He is not the mask of power but the naked feedback loop of power, where every insult, every eruption, every excess becomes another act in the endless series.

In this sense, Trump is not only an American story. He is a prototype

of a global form of politics that may dominate the century: spectacle as structure, personality as policy, outrage as order.

The tragedy is that it works. The danger is that it lasts.